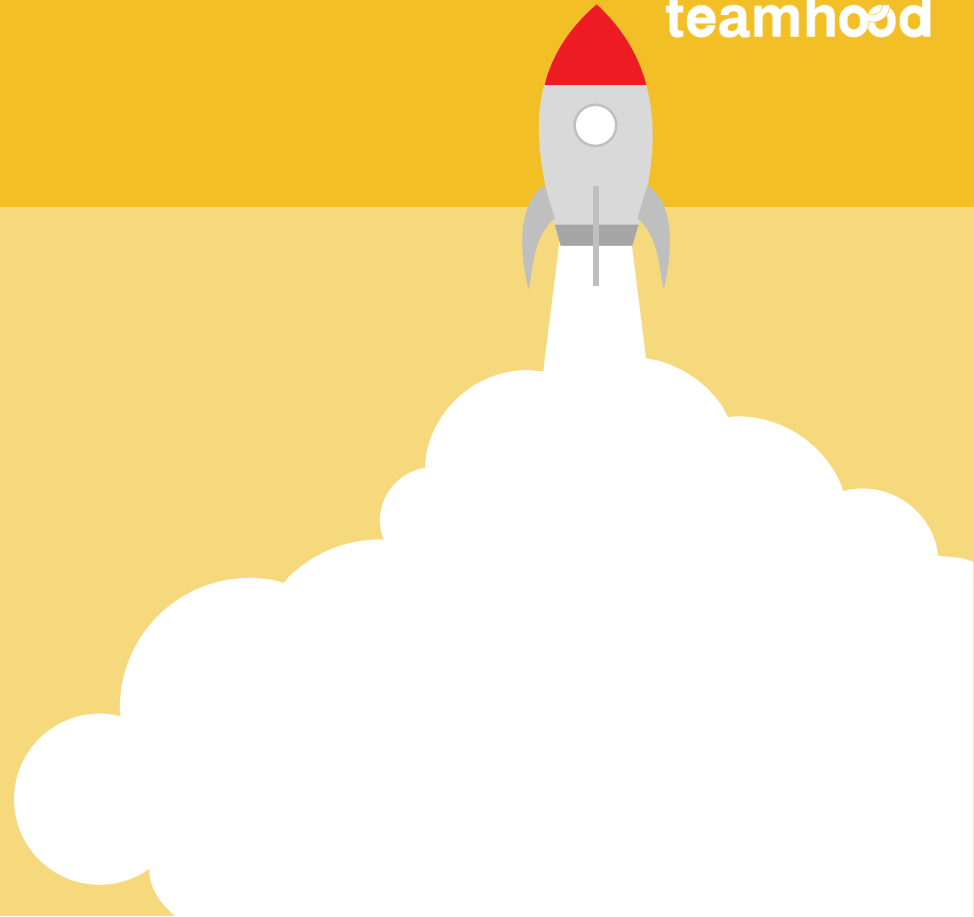# SCRUMBAN - ULTIMATE GUIDE

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What is Scrumban?

Scrumban is an Agile framework that helps teams manage projects more efficiently.

Scrumban was created by mixing two other popular Agile frameworks Scrum and Kanban. Initially, it was used as a stepping stone when switching from one of the parent frameworks to the other. However, in time teams started seeing value in Scrumban and it became a standalone practice.

Why Scrumban?

Easier to adopt than Scrum

01

Scrumban has a less constrained process, more similar to Kanban. Thus, the teams can learn and pick it up faster.

Great for R&D teams and product development

02

The quick paced process allows to test out ideas quickly and without much loss.

Focused on throughput and continuous improvement

03

Scrumban ensures the team produces at a steady pace and keeps improving their process.

Key aspects of Scrumban

1. Planning & planning trigger

The team plans only for next Sprint and only when needed.

2. Kanban board

For visualizing and tracking work items throughout the process.

3. WIP Limit

Limits the number of tasks the team can work on at a time.

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4. Work freeze and Triage

Helps identify and execute the most important work items at the end.

5. Planning buckets

Aids the Scrumban team in long-term planning efforts.

1. Planning and planning trigger

In Scrumban the team plans for the next Sprint only. This is done based on previous performance and estimation.

To know when to plan for the next iteration Scrumban teams use a planning trigger. This is a number that defines how many tasks should be left in the backlog when the team holds a planning session.

For example, a team of 5 people have an average cycle time of 1 day and it takes 2 days for them to hold a planning session. To make sure there are no interruptions in the process, they have to hold the planning session at a time where the team still has 2 days of work left in the backlog. So their planning trigger is 10.

2. Kanban board

To monitor the work that is being done, Scrumban teams use a Kanban board. This allows them to track all the work that is planned, being done and completed.

Kanban boards vary from team to team, but usually are composed out of Backlog, Process section (divided into columns based on your process – Design, Manufacturing, etc.) and Done column.

It is important to note, that the team members pull tasks from the backlog on their own. Once a team member is done with a task, they review the backlog and pick the highest priority task based on their skillset. This is why it is important to review the board daily and reprioritize if needed.

3. WIP limits

To ensure constant value delivery, Scrumban teams limit the amount of work items the team can work on at any given time. This is called a Work In Progress (WIP) limit.

It helps deliver each individual work item faster and allows to more easily estimate the delivery dates of all work items.

Usually the teams set this limit based on the amount of people in the team. For example, if there are 5 people in the team the WIP limit is 5. Thus, each team member can work on one task at a time.

4. Work freeze and triage

To control the work scope at the end of the project, Scrumban teams use Work freeze and Triage.

First a Work freeze is used, meaning the team cannot add any new tasks to the backlog. Then, the project manager or the team implements the Triage. Which means they look through the backlog and decide which of the tasks they are going to complete and which will be left undone in this cycle.

These measures help ensure the team delivers a minimum viable product at the end of each sprint throughout the project.

5. Planning buckets

Planning buckets are the long-term planning technique that Scrumban teams use.

It works by specifying 3 buckets (this can be lists or simply additional columns in a Kanban board) where the team lists out their roadmap.
- The first bucket holds the largest ideas and goals that the team wants to realize within a year.
- The second bucket holds clearer plans that the team wants to realize within 6 months.
- And the third bucket holds specific plans for the next 3 months.

As the team decides to move forth with their plans, they are moved to the backlog and executed in the next iteration.
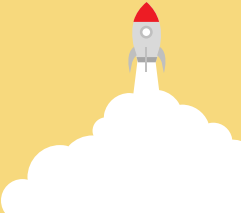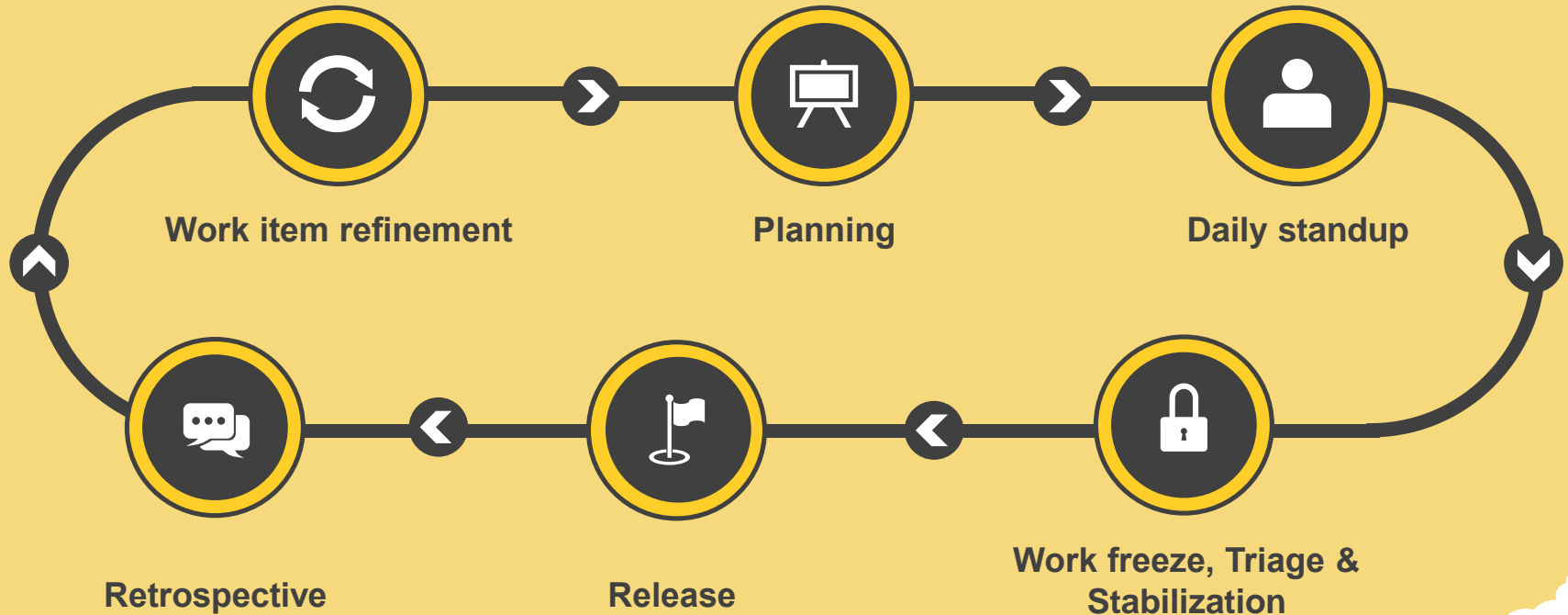
Scrumban Team roles

Scrumban does not specify any roles for the teams to use. Instead, the teams are encouraged to keep the roles they used previously and change them up only if necessary.

One thing to note when assembling a Scrumban team is to make sure they are self-managing. As many processes are left for the team to handle without having a project manager.

Scrumban cycle

The Scrumban cycle usually follows these 6 *steps* that are repeated during every Sprint throughout the project.

Work item refinement

Planning

Daily standup

Retrospective

Release

Work freeze, Triage & Stabilization

Work item refinement

1

2

3

4

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6

Work item refinement takes place before every Sprint and is aimed to identify which of the work items should be considered for the next iteration.

This meeting is attended by the project manager and the stakeholders, and it helps set the direction in which the team will be going next. It is important to consider which of the suggested work items are the most important and why.
Once you have a prioritized list, you also have to define what has to be done for each of those items. So that once the team gathers for a planning session they can pick up the work items and start working on them without any issues.

Planning

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Once the project begins and then each time after the planning trigger goes off, the Scrumban team meets to plan tasks for their next Sprint.

The team takes the most important work items from the refined product backlog, specify what has to be done for each and estimate how much time that is going to take. The team only takes so many tasks that they can complete in one Sprint.

Daily standup

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The team then starts working on the planned tasks. Each team member pulling tasks from the backlog based on their priority.

To make sure tasks are completed quickly, no team member can work on more than one task at a time. And to track the progress and identify issues, the team gathers each day to review their progress in a short standup meeting.

Work freeze, Triage & Stabilization

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If the team is working with time boxed Sprints or the project is coming to an end, the project manager might use a Work freeze. This means that the team can no longer take on new tasks from the backlog.

Then the project manager holds a Triage and decides which of the backlog items the team is going to complete in the current Sprint or project, and which of them will be left unfinished.

Work freeze and triage mean that the amount of work completed by the team will stop growing and stabilize.

Release

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Once the team reaches the deadline or completes all the planned tasks, the Sprint ends. The goal of the team is to make an incremental change to the end product during the Sprint and then present it to the stakeholders during the Release.

Here, the project manager or the team representative explains what has been done and gathers feedback from the client. This way checking if they like where the team is going and gather any new requirements.

This allows the Scrumban team to adjust course and present the best result for the clients.

Retrospective

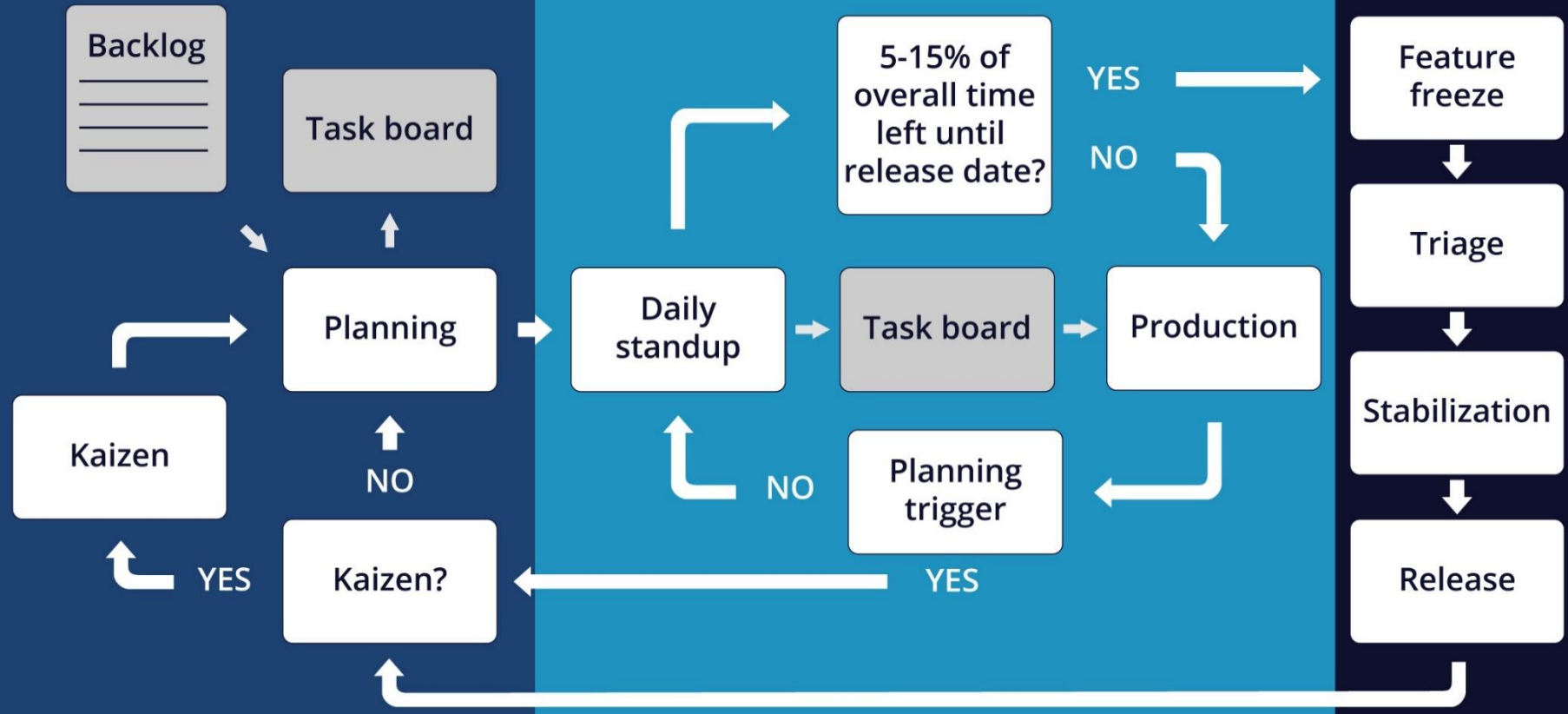The final step of the Scrumban process is the Retrospective.

After every release, the team gathers to review their work processes and to identify what went well and what needs improvements for the next cycle. This is a good place to implement process changes and to commit to 1 or 2 concrete improvements for the next Sprint.

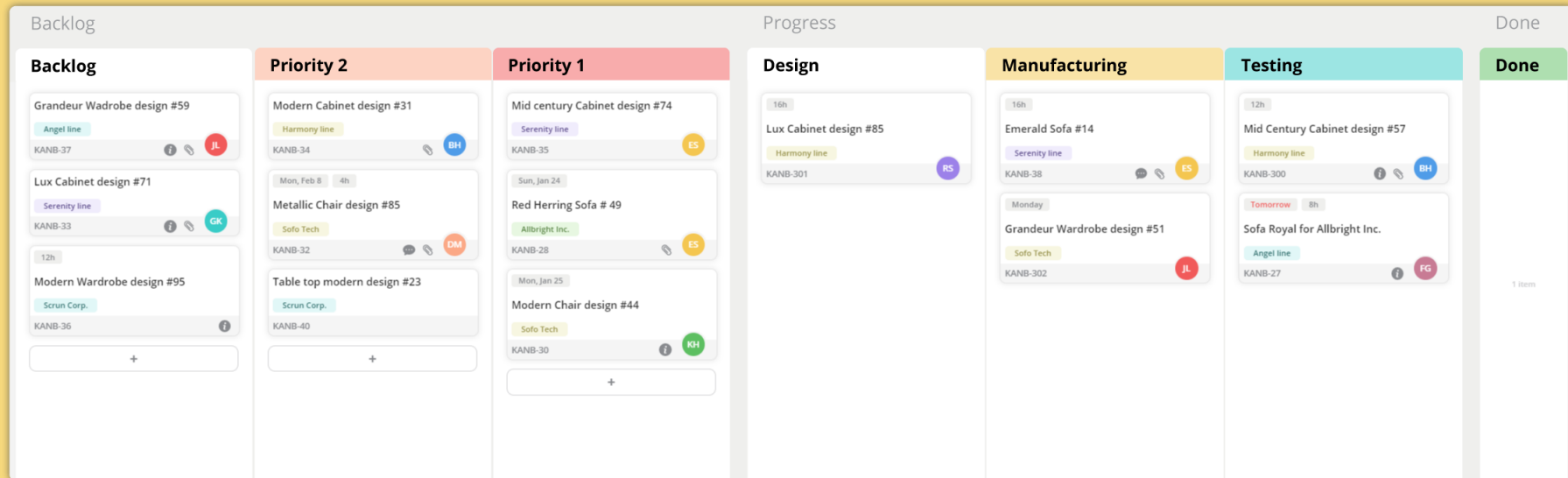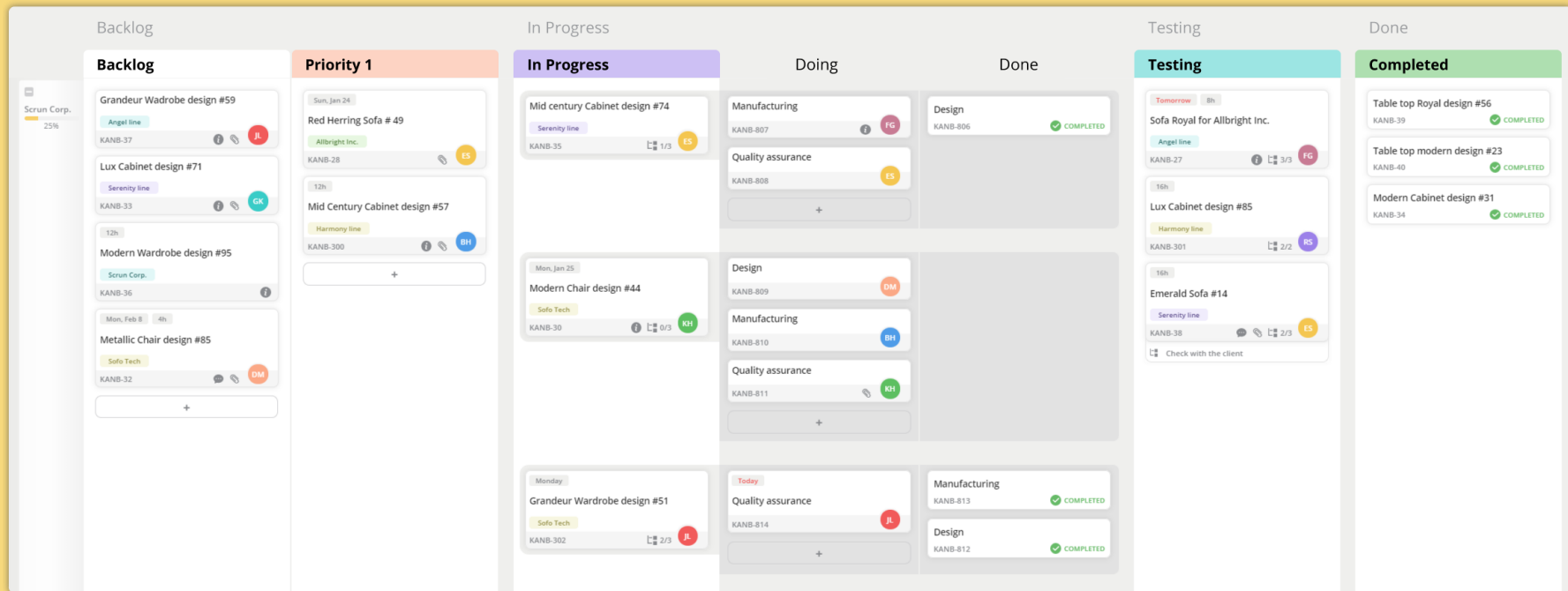Once the Retrospective is done, the cycle begins again from the first step.

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Scrumban board example

Backlog

Backlog

Grandeur Wadrobe design #59
Angel line
KANB-37

Lux Cabinet design #71
Serenity line
KANB-33

12h
Modern Wardrobe design #95
Scrun Corp.
KANB-36

Priority 2

Modern Cabinet design #31
Harmony line
KANB-34

Mon, Feb 8   4h
Metallic Chair design #85
Sofo Tech
KANB-32

Table top modern design #23
Scrun Corp.
KANB-40

Priority 1

Mid century Cabinet design #74
Serenity line
KANB-35

Sun, Jan 24
Red Herring Sofa # 49
Allbright Inc.
KANB-28

Mon, Jan 25
Modern Chair design #44
Sofo Tech
KANB-30

Progress

Design

16h
Lux Cabinet design #85
Harmony line
KANB-301

Manufacturing

16h
Emerald Sofa #14
Serenity line
KANB-38

Monday
Grandeur Wardrobe design #51
Sofo Tech
KANB-302

Testing

12h
Mid Century Cabinet design #57
Harmony line
KANB-300

Tomorrow   8h
Sofa Royal for Allbright Inc.
Angel line
KANB-27

Done

Done

1 item

Scrumban board example

	Scrum	Kanban	Scrumban
Iterations	1-4 week sprints	Continuous work alongside shorter releases	Continuous work with short planning cycles & longer release cycles
Work routines	Push and pull principles, early binding to team members	Pull principle, late binding to team members	Pull principle, late binding to team members
Scope limits	Sprint limits total work amount	Work in progress limits	Work in progress limits
Planning routines	Sprint planning	Release/iteration planning, demand planning	Planning on demand for new tasks
Estimation	Must be done before a sprint	Optional	Optional
Performance metrics	Burndown	Cumulative flow diagram, lead & cycle time	Average cycle time
Continuous improvement	Sprint retrospective	Optional	Short Kaizen event as an option
Meetings	Sprint planning, daily scrum, retrospective	Can be avoided	Short Kaizen event
Team members	Cross-functional team members	Cross-functional team members, specialization is allowed	Specialization or preference to tasks
Task size	Not bigger than a Sprint	Any size	Any size
New items in iteration	Forbidden	Allowed whenever queue allows it	Allowed whenever queue allows it
Ownership	Owned by a team	Supports multiple teams ownership	Supports multiple teams ownership
Board	Defined/reset each sprint	Persistent	Persistent
Prioritization	Through backlog	Optional	Recommended on each planning
Roles	Scrum master, product owner, team	Not defined, may vary	Not defined, may vary
Rules	Constrained process	Only a few constraints, flexible process	Slightly constrained process
Fit for	Teams working on product or project which is longer than a year	Support and maintenance teams, continuous product manufacturing	Startups, fast-pace projects, continuous product manufacturing
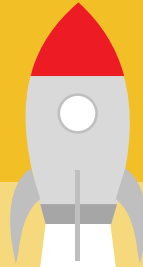
Thank you

For more information on Agile, visit:

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